

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

BRYANT COLLEGE

21 MAY 1977

I. INTRODUCTION *BACK RI/BRYANT*

- HONORED TO BE ASKED TO SHARE THIS DAY WITH YOU -
GRADUATES AND YOUR FAMILIES
- YOU HAVE REASON TO BE PROUD -
 - MADE A COMMITMENT - STUCK BY IT
 - WORKED HARD TO REACH THIS DAY
 - TODAY YOUR EFFORTS ARE BEING REWARDED

II. GREATER OPPORTUNITY TODAY

- YOU ARE VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE GONE TO COLLEGE
IN THE MID-70'S
 - IN THE LATE 60'S AND EARLY 70'S, YOUNG
PEOPLE, WHILE JUSTIFIABLY ACTING TO CORRECT
THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL WRONGS WHICH THEY
PERCEIVED, WERE ALSO THE VICTIMS OF THEIR
OWN CRUSADES. PARTICIPATION BECAME VERY
BLACK AND WHITE; YOU EITHER WERE FOR THEIR
CAUSES OR AGAINST THEM; YOU COULDN'T BE A
MODERATE, SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, WITHOUT

SEEMING TO COP-OUT. THE PRESSURE FOR A
~~COLLEGE~~
~~YOUNG~~ PERSON TO CHOOSE SIDES WAS ENORMOUS.

AND THE PRESSURE TO JOIN THE SIDE AGAINST
THAT AMORPHOUS MASS KNOWN AS "THE GOVERNMENT"
WAS THE GREATEST OF ALL.

- YET, FEW THINGS IN LIFE ARE ALL ONE WAY OR
ALL THE OTHER - AS YOU WELL KNOW.
GOVERNMENTS ARE NO MORE ALL-EVIL THAN HUMAN
BEINGS. AND THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS
FOR 200 YEARS DISPLAYED A MARVELOUS
RESILIENCY WHICH IN THE END ALWAYS HAS HAD
A WAY OF MAKING AMERICANS PROUD TO BE
AMERICANS.
- IN YOUR COLLEGE YEARS, YOU HAVE FACED MUCH
LESS OF THAT UNNATURAL PRESSURE AND CAN
TAKE A MORE BALANCED VIEW OF LIFE, OF WHAT
IS HAPPENING BOTH NATIONALLY AND
INTERNATIONALLY, AND OF THE PART YOUR
GOVERNMENT IS PLAYING IN THE PROCESS.

III. GOVERNMENT SERVICE

- THAT YOU DO TAKE A KEEN INTEREST IN AND CONDUCT OBJECTIVE SCRUTINY OF YOUR GOVERNMENT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT. IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP EXCESSES SUCH AS WATERGATE FROM EVER RECURRING AGAIN. MORE THAN THAT, HOWEVER, IT IS AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR EACH OF YOU INDIVIDUALLY. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT PUBLIC ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD. IT HAS ITS FLAWS, BUT IT HAS BEEN TREMENDOUSLY SUCCESSFUL IN THE LAST 201 YEARS. WITH ITS FUTURE SUCCESS IS INTERTWINED INEXTRICABLY THE FREEDOM AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE ENTIRE WORLD AROUND US. MOST OF ALL I CAN ASSURE YOU FROM 31 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE THAT LIFE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS EXCITING. IT WAS EXCITING TO ME 23 YEARS AGO WHEN I FIRST CAME TO WASHINGTON AS A VERY JUNIOR OFFICER DOING VERY SUBORDINATE TASKS. THAT SENSE OF EXCITEMENT, OF VITALITY, AND OF CONTRIBUTION IS WHAT HAS KEPT ME IN THE

EMPLOY OF OUR GOVERNMENT EVER SINCE.

- I CAN ONLY URGE THAT EACH OF YOU TODAY, TOMORROW,
OR IN THE DISTANT FUTURE--BUT AT SOME TIME IN
YOUR LIFE--GIVE THOUGHT TO SERVING YOUR
GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY.

- I GUARANTEE YOU WILL FIND IT EXCITING.
- I GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL FIND IT REWARDING
BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE A TALENT THAT THE
GOVERNMENT CAN USE, YOU OWE IT TO OFFER
IT FOR AT LEAST A PART OF YOUR WORKING LIFE;
IN SO OFFERING YOU WILL BE MAKING A
CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONTINUED STRENGTH OF OUR
COUNTRY AND ALL THE WONDERFUL THINGS FOR
WHICH IT STANDS.
- AND WITH SOME ENVY I CAN TELL YOU THAT IF
YOU THINK ABOUT GOVERNMENT SERVICE TODAY YOU
WILL BE ONE OF MANY BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE WHOM
I SEE AROUND THE WHITE HOUSE, THE HALLS OF
CONGRESS, THE PENTAGON, THE CIA, AND
ELSEWHERE. THE PLACE IS TEEMING WITH PEOPLE

OF YOUR AGE AND JUST A LITTLE OLDER. AND
THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM ARE IMMENSE.

- BUT EVEN IF YOU DO NOT FIND THAT IT FITS INTO
YOUR PATTERN TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN ~~THE~~ ^{YOUR}
GOVERNMENT, I URGE YOU TO RECOGNIZE YOUR
RESPONSIBILITIES OF BEING AN INFORMED AND
CONCERNED CITIZEN.

- YOU ~~MUST~~ ^{CAN} FOLLOW THE ACTIVITIES OF YOUR
GOVERNMENT IN THE NEWSPAPERS.
- YOU ~~MUST~~ ^{CAN} BE AWARE OF YOUR CONGRESSMAN'S
ATTITUDES AND VOTING RECORDS AND STAY IN
TOUCH WITH WHAT HE IS DOING IN REPRESENTING
YOU.
- YOU ~~MUST~~ ^{CAN} BE WILLING TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS
AND OFFER YOUR ADVICE IN LETTERS TO YOUR
CONGRESSMAN AND TO THE HEADS OF THOSE
AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENT THAT MOST AFFECT
OR CONCERN YOU - BE IT MYSELF IN THE CIA,
DR. SCHLESINGER IN THE ENERGY ADMINISTRATION,
SECRETARY ANDRUS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE

INTERIOR, OR SECRETARY VANCE AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE - OR OTHERS. I ASSURE
YOU THAT NONE OF US FEELS WE HAVE ALL THE
ANSWERS. WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR GOOD
IDEAS.

IV. CONCLUSION

- WHATEVER YOU DO
 - GET INVOLVED
 - DON'T BE SATISFIED WITH ~~CARETAKING~~ - *KIBBITZING & CRITCHING FROM SIDE LINES*
CONTRIBUTE PART OF YOURSELF - YOUR TIME,
IDEAS, ETC.
 - CONTINUE THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS YOU HAVE
JUST BEGUN HERE AT BRYANT.
- I WISH YOU ALL SUCCESS - IN WHATEVER TERMS YOU
MEASURE IT - AND A FULL, REWARDING LIFE.

CONGRATULATIONS